

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 HA-05 IO-13  
/073 W

-----061366 111115Z /21

R 101715Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MASERU  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8391  
INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY MBABANE  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN  
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 0639

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR, SREF, SHUG, BC, LT  
SUBJECT: LESOTHO- BOTSWANA REFUGEE RIFT

REF: A. GABORONE 044, B. 77 MASERU 2049, C. 77 MASERU 1882,

1. REFTELS B AND C ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN THAT THE LESOTHO STUDENT "REFUGEES" FLED TO BOTSWANA OUT OF FEAR OF PUNISHMENT FOR MISBEHAVIOR RATHER THAN THE FEAR OF POLITICAL PERSECUTION. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE STUDENTS WERE INVOLVED IN DISTURBANCES AT PEKA HIGH SCHOOL (IN NORTHWESTERN LESOTHO) PROTESTING THE QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION OR LACK OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS OR THE PERFORMANCE OF CERTAIN INSTRUCTORS OR A COMBINATION THEREOF. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION INDICATING THAT THE STUDENTS WERE EXPRESSING POLITICAL VIEWS ALTHOUGH THEIR REPORTED DISSATISFACTION WITH THE SCHOOL MAY HAVE BEEN LAID AT THE DOOR OF GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING TO ONE REFUGEE SOWETO STUDENT HERE, THEIR FLIGHT WAS PROMPTED BY FEAR OF PUNISHMENT FOR DISTURBING SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND/OR  
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CAUSING DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY. TO DATE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT POLITICAL PERSECUTION IN FACT WAS INVOLVED AS INFERRED IN COMMENT (PARA 5) REFTEL, WHATEVER REASONING OF BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE HAD FOR GRANTING STUDENT ASYLUM.

2. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AFRICA DESK OFFICER, RECENTLY TOLD EMBOFF THAT GOL IS DISTURBED BY GOB'S REFUSAL TO TREAT

THESE SELF-PROCLAIMED REFUGEES DIFFERENTLY FROM GENUINE POLITICAL REFUGEES. GOB IS VIEWED AS BEING UNCOOPERATIVE AND DELIBERATELY TRYING TO POLITICIZE AND RADICALIZE THE STUDENTS BY ALLOWING THEM TO REMAIN CLOSE TO FUGITIVE OPPOSITION LEADERS FROM LESOTHO, INSTEAD OF RETURNING THE STUDENTS TO LESOTHO.

3. COMMENT: WHILE GOL CERTAINLY HAS A TENDENCY TO GO OFF THE DEEP END, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE RECORD THAT THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE INDICATES THAT THESE STUDENTS WERE NOT FLEEING POLITICAL PERSECUTION.  
BIELAK

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REFUGEES, STUDENTS, CIVIL DISORDERS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 10 mar 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978MASERU00639  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 78 GABORONE 44, 77 MASERU 2049, 77 MASERU 1882  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
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**Review Event:**  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
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**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014